

General Delivery
Moose Factory
POL 1W0

Mr. George Thomson,
Deputy Minister,
Ministry of the Attorney General,
Queen's Park,
Toronto.

FAX: 326 4018

Personal and Confidential

Dear Mr. Thomson,

I am writing to inform you that I have been made aware of a specific instance of alleged child abuse in an Ottawa Board of Education School. I understand that it is a legal requirement to report such instances of abuse.

However, in the past I have reported other instances of abuse of children with sensitivities to the Ottawa Children's Aid Society, and to the crown attorney's office in Ottawa. Their response has not been helpful. The crown attorney refused to investigate the complaint, and did not contact the appropriate police authorities. The director of the children's aid intervened with the result that the abuser, in that case the Carleton Board of Education, felt impunity in continuing the abuse, in a specific case and in general. As the crown would not act, even in clear specific instances of abuse, it is taking appeals through the human rights commission and the appeal process of the Ministry of Education to bring an end to abuse at the Carleton Board.

In the current case, a teacher who had been told a child's behaviour problems were related to sensitivities became frustrated with the child's behaviour and reportedly shook the child vigorously. This occurred in an Ottawa Board school after we have spent years trying to sensitize the board as to how to provide reasonable accommodation to children with this disability. It would seem an unresponsive board is at least as much at fault as the specific teacher, who may be aware of negative attitudes in the Ottawa Board administration on this subject, who became frustrated with the child.

The current and past Ministers of Education have indicated that sensitivities should be taken into account when assessing learning or behaviour problems. The Ottawa Board has been approached since 1982, at least, and has

conducted no sensitization process to staff that we are aware of, despite many expressions of concern by parents, teachers, and by our association.

I realize that I may be breaking the law by refusing to report this instance of child abuse to appropriate authorities. I would be willing to release the name of my source of information to you personally, if you can assure me that negative attitudes in the Ottawa Crown Attorney's office have changed.

Respectfully yours,

Chris Brown
Ottawa Branch President
Allergy and Environmental Health Association
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cc. Ottawa Crown Attorney's Office
Ottawa Children's Aid Society
Ottawa Board of Education
Ottawa Police Force